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STATE FOR NEA, H, HAITI TASK FORCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/18/2021

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KBWG](#) [HA](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: REP. HASTINGS DISCUSSES HAITI AND MIDDLE EAST  
PEACE WITH ISRAELI DEPUTY FM AYALON

Classified By: Political Counselor Marc Sievers for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Concluding his 14th trip to Israel in 18 years, Representative Alcee Hastings (D-FL 23rd district) told Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon that he is leaving Israel this time more optimistically than when he left in December 2008. He added that the U.S. Administration needs to "be very active" regarding the region. Discussion covered assistance efforts for the current crisis in Haiti before focusing on Middle East regional issues. END SUMMARY.

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Relief for Haiti  
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¶2. (U) Aware that the Congressman represents a district with the second largest Haitian diaspora population, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon invited Representative Hastings and other members of the CODEL to visit the Foreign Ministry situation room, where senior Israeli officials were being briefed on Israeli efforts to provide disaster assistance to Haiti. Israel planned to send two planes transporting a 220-person delegation to Port-au-Prince that evening (January 14). Because Israel is so far from Haiti, its relief efforts will focus on field hospitals. The relief package includes a Home Front Command field hospital and rescue unit, as well as teams from Magen David Adom (local ICRC equivalent) and Israeli National Police rescue squads.  
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Deputy FM Ayalon supports an active U.S. role in the Middle East  
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¶3. (C) Deputy FM Ayalon told Rep. Hastings that he admires his leadership and values his friendship, which he deemed "priceless." Ayalon said that we are at a crossroads now, with Special Envoy Mitchell and President Obama positioned to make a real impact. He highlighted the effect of the President's Cairo speech: "to bring people together." The Israeli goal is peaceful coexistence, with dignity and rights for all; the form this would take is a two-state solution, according to Ayalon. In moving toward this goal, Ayalon said, the Palestinians need to look not only at actions on the ground--economic development, movement and access easings--or even the solid security pillars constructed through General Dayton's efforts, but need to focus on building solid political pillars as well. Israel is concerned about the new Palestinian preconditions to negotiation, and hopes that these will be relaxed. Ayalon said that he does not believe that ultimately settlements will be an obstacle; after all, he noted, they were not an obstacle to peace with Egypt or Gaza disengagement. He concurred that Arab countries need to be more active in supporting Abbas and Fayyad and in isolating Hamas, but noted that Arab leaders are notorious "fence-sitters"

--hedging their bets, in this case, by supporting both Hamas and Abbas.

¶4. (C) Ayalon stressed the need to focus efforts against "the threats to all--Iran and Hizballah." He praised efforts by the U.S. Administration to engage Iran, and noted that he believes President Obama can create a coalition in support of tough sanctions. Ayalon sees a window of opportunity in February, when France chairs the Security Council. Ayalon said that Iran has miscalculated, playing cards that it does not hold: intimidation through psychological warfare will not work, because Israel will not be intimidated; and attempting to drive a wedge between Russia, China and the rest will not work either, as all will join together in a united front against Iran.

¶5. (C) 5. Ayalon said that he is looking forward to the Strategic Dialogue in February, in particular in expanding the traditional Strategic Dialogue agenda to cover new issues such as Israel's role in international organizations and promoting cooperation between USAID and its Israeli equivalent, MASHAV, to work together in third countries, especially on issues such as power and water infrastructure.

¶6. (U) Representative Hastings has not cleared this message.

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